



Dead Horse

March 2011

DISPATCH

A newsletter by and for the volunteers of Dead Horse Ranch State Park

Volunteers in Action!

Welcome Bill & Jan!



Bill & Jan Birtwell are two of our park's newest volunteers. You may have seen Bill & Jan as they come into the park, or at the maintenance shop looking for trail tools, or spending time talking to Ranger Randy about the Dead Horse Trail System. They started volunteering in December, 2010, and the beautiful weather we've had this January has enabled them to get quite a bit done on the trails adjacent to the park on Coconino National Forest - trails commonly known as the "Thumper Loop".

The interesting thing about the Thumper Loop is that it is not actually on State Park land. Therefore, volunteers are prohibited from working there unless they have an agreement with the US Forest Service. Further, there are three protected plants on the Lime Kiln Trail, which is part of the DH Trail System. The endangered Arizona Cliffrose (*purshia subintegra*) is found in only four populations in the world, all of which are in Arizona. The largest population occurs here in the Verde Valley in the area of this trail. The Verde Valley Sage (*salvia dorrii* ssp. *mearnsii*) occurs in similar soils and has colorful blooms as well. Ripley Wild Buckwheat (*Eriogonum ripleyi*) is another rare plant in this area. Because of this, the Forest Service is careful about letting just anyone head out and do trail work. However, even though the DH Trails System is not on our park's property, all of the trailheads are, so the Trail System is one

of the things that draws visitors to the park. For years, the trail has been neglected, and torrential rains over the past few seasons have badly eroded some sections of the trail. Ruts up to two feet deep have started up on parts of the trail and with increased use over time, the damage has only accelerated. That's where Bill & Jan come in! Not only are they Volunteers with Arizona State Parks, but they are members of the Friends of the Forest, and are USFS Volunteers through the Red Rock Ranger District (Coconino National Forest). They have signed the necessary agreements to work on the Dead Horse Trails System, and are now hard at work trying to make up for many years of neglect. Bill & Jan have been going out to work 4-5 times a week for the past few months, digging drainages, moving rocks, and filling in big ruts. Some of the work they're doing is so far out on the trail that they have to carry their tools for an hour-and-a-half **to AND from** the site of the repairs!! They also plan on attending the Trail Boss Training to be held at the Red Rock Ranger Station, in the Village of Oak Creek, March 25-27, in order to hone their trail-building skills. When they're not here repairing the Thumper Loop, they



volunteer at Acadia National Park, Maine, working as hosts at the Seawall Campground. In fact, Jan is applying for a Ranger position there! The Birtwells will be here until sometime in early April, so if you see them, give 'em a shout!

submitted by Randy Victory, Park Ranger II

Russ & Joyce Jones commented on the newsletters, when talking with Ranger Eric. They said, "We really like receiving the newsletters. They are top rate!"

Hats off to Carolyn and Nan!

submitted by Ranger Eric

To Dead Horse employees and volunteers: On behalf of the Verde Valley Children's Fund, I thank you for your cash donation in December (donations from Volunteers & Rangers collected at the Christmas Party). We purchase clothing for needy children in the local area, and your contribution helped several kids. We appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely, Sharon Block

This year we will experience 4 unusual dates: 1/1/11, 1/11/11, 11/1/11, 11/11/11. NOW go figure this out... take the last 2 digits of the year you were born plus the age you will be THIS year and it will be EQUAL TO 111. (But, only if you were born in the 1900's)

email sent to Carolyn Meehan

Thumper Trail Gets a Face Lift Thanks to Volunteers



A trail work day (held February 5th) was well-attended by 15 participants. The Thumper Trail (part of the Dead Horse Trails System) was the target of Saturday's work. It has many sections which go straight down the fall line and erosion has become a major ongoing issue. Although the trail is on Forest Service land, the trailheads which access it are in the park, so the trail affects the visitation at Dead Horse Ranch. The volunteer crew didn't just work on the trail, either. Brenna Kenney, the USFS Ranger who organized the event, spent a lot of time teaching the group how to lay rock so that the trail would weather torrential rains and reduce erosion, and also could withstand the punishment of heavy equestrian, mountain bike and hiker use. (As a mountain biker myself, I was happy to hear that over half the volunteers were mountain cyclists. The photo above was taken as the crew started to assemble, so not all of the participants are pictured.) *submitted by Randy Victory*

Fort DHRSP



Little Karlee and Wyatt Swiger, children of Ranger Justin and Melinda Swiger, are building a series of forts near their home on Golden Eagle Road. Marked by an iced tea can, the fort features a woodpile, file box full of toys, and a shopping cart and wagon for fetching supplies. Other forts can be found in more secluded locations. The kids, on short notice, could not come up with a name for their fort. *submitted by Nan Hephner*

Root of all Evil Removed!



DHRSP Ranger Randy Victory reports that the successful partnership with the Yavapai County Juvenile Probation Department continues. For the past two years the Probation Crew, with the help of our own volunteers, has worked to eliminate the invasive species *althanthus altissima* (Tree of Heaven) from the Mesquite Cabin area. The work started with pulling out the smaller shoots, and has progressed to the point of digging out huge stumps. In the above photo, two of our volunteers, Jake Pratt & Bruce Williamson, prepare to haul off one of the big stumps. Notice that the weight of the huge stump is actually deforming the bucket of the John Deere 1250 tractor!

Hi Eric, I love all of our memories of our time and friends at DHRSP, but Scooter continues to be the best thing of all from AZ. I remember that the first night we brought Scooter "home" there was a wiener roast at Fran's at Mesquite, and Ann was wanting to be next in line if Scooter ever needed another home, so when I saw she and Bill were back, I wanted her to know he is well loved and will be in our hearts for years to come. I keep hoping the right small motorhome will claim our hearts soon, so we can swing by DHRSP. As I get this gluten free life more under control and feel better than I have in years, I have a real yen to hit the road again. Amen... Love... SuC (Sue & Bill Cane)

Hello Eric, It has been a while since we were at Dead Horse Ranch as volunteers, but we have good memories of our time there and often talk about the fun as well the challenges we had while working at the park. Yes it would be nice to receive the newsletter via email. That way we can keep up with what's happening! We are still in Deming. We recently bought a house and have kept the motor home. Good hearing from you,

John & Winky Gibson

Roll Out the Barrel!



The barrel above is part of the **Verde Valley Wine Trail**, and it sits in front of the Dead Horse Visitor Center.

Singing "Roll out the Barrel" (or 'in' as the case may be), Ranger Max Castillo rolls the barrel in and out of the office when it opens and closes. In his absence, others do the job but not with the same lusty voice of Ranger Max.

The barrel is one of 40 turned into artists' canvases and sprinkled throughout Cottonwood and the Verde Valley as a very unique art project. They are painted by different artists who have tried to capture the qualities enjoyed in the Verde Valley. Dead Horse's barrel, for instance, features a Great Blue Heron on one side and a majestic gray hawk on the other. The barrels can be found at wineries, tasting rooms and businesses.

In the spring of 2012, the barrels will be auctioned. Proceeds will benefit the viticulture program at Yavapai College - Verde Valley Campus, the first viticulture program in Arizona. This summer Yavapai College planted its first acre of vineyards to assist in the education of their students. Viticulture (from the Latin word for vine) is the science, production and study of grapes which deals with the series of events that occur in the vineyard. For more information, go to www.VVwinetrail.com.

submitted by Nan Hephner

Hi Carolyn. Thanks for a copy of the Dispatch. Always nice to hear how things are going in the park. We just returned from Quartzite. There was a call from Eric and I am pretty sure he is hoping we will return this summer. We will not be available this summer; however. All is well otherwise.

John & Marylou Anderson



Notes ABOUT Ranger Eric:

Our Volunteer Coordinator

On a lovely, sunny Arizona morning, Ranger Eric Buzonas popped a piece of bread in the toaster for his young son, Nathan, to have for breakfast. But for some reason, the bread wouldn't go down, so Eric popped the piece of bread

into another slot on the 4-slice machine, and googled and played with his son while waiting. All of a sudden smoke filled the air, along with a horrible stench previously unknown to mankind, so horrible that neighbor Justin Swiger quickly evacuated his home and called for a chemical removal van.

Meanwhile, it took a moment for Eric to realize that the smell and smoke were emanating from his toaster, and it was nothing like that well-known burnt toast smell. Moving quickly to unplug it, he found the cause. An innocent mouse had apparently crawled into his toaster and died, and the odor of its cremated remains filled every nook and cranny of the house. Ranger Eric was, of course, horrified. How long had the mouse been in the toaster? Was it dead, or did it die when the heat began? These and other questions remain unanswered as the investigation continues. However, the toaster was quickly removed to the trash can, never to be trusted again. The poor, charred mouse will rest forever in its little toaster prison, electrocuted and fried for having done nothing at all, really.

submitted by Nan Hephner

DHRSP to the Rescue!

Volunteer Nan Hephner stepped outside the office by the window to make a personal call and heard a cat crying. She walked all around, trying to see where the sound came from, and finally determined that it had to be on the roof of the window corner, which sticks out toward the entrance.

Ranger Linda Hauk came out to listen and quickly ran back in to get a step stool. Thus began the great cat rescue. Linda crawled up to stand in the flowerbed and looked into the dark space between the roof and the wall. Sure enough - a very unhappy and cold cat lurked in the dark. It wouldn't come to Linda, so armed with a broom, Ranger Justin Swiger climbed up on the door side, and attempted to push the cat toward Linda (sorry, no camera available - use your imagination). Eventually it worked. Nan quickly stepped forward to take the cat from Linda but as she pulled it out, it became obvious that this was no kitten! All that could be seen were huge claws, flailing feet and barred teeth, accompanied by a threatening hissing sound. The huge feline, sensing freedom, wriggled free and with a mighty bound was gone, never to be seen again. Well, not yet anyway. Much speculation abounds as to how the cat ended up underneath the roof overhang above the window. Some think it might have been chased by coyotes or other creatures of the night. Others believe it may have been placed there for safekeeping by a very large green person known in the area as "Frankenrose"!

Oh The Many Faces of Dead Horse Ranch State Park

On January 31, 2011 park visitor Tina Leyba donated a wonderful framed poster to Dead Horse Ranch State Park. Tina is a local resident of Cottonwood, Arizona and has a passion for photography.

The poster is a collection of her fondest memories, representing Tina's personal connection to the park. With her photographs of wildlife, plants, sunsets and morning mist, she shows how much the beauty of Dead Horse Ranch has impacted her life.

Tina has revealed the many faces of our park, some of which may not be apparent to the casual visitor. Thanks to Tina's photos, that beauty will endure for generations to come.

submitted by Ranger Eric Buzonas & Nan Hephner

New Reservation System Has Rangers Down on Their Knees



Ranger Max Castillo and Phoenix IT employee, Randy Miller, had to drop to their knees while trying to figure out how to put a new cash drawer together for the reservation system coming to Dead Horse. Rangers have been in meetings with folks from the Phoenix office, trying to work out all the bugs, figuring out where to start with the reservations, how to handle the gift shop with the computer that controls all sales in the office, etc. There are ulcers where there were no ulcers as everyone faces the upcoming time when the park goes to a reservation system for camping. That may be later in February, or even into March. Check the website and when it comes up, take a look at it. The program looks to be a nice addition for our visitors. Not so sure about the staff, though.

Carolyn, thank you so very much for sending the newsletters to us. We enjoy them so much. Thanks again. Bob and Elsie Ross





Nan's Notes:

Report from Editor
Nan at DHRSP!

Verde Valley Birding & Nature Festival

Family Day at the Verde Valley Birding and Nature Festival will be Saturday, April 30.

Barbie Hart is asking for volunteers in a variety of categories during the entire festival, and also at Family Day. This year's event will be bigger than ever, according to Barbie. There are new art projects (don't throw away any toilet paper rolls!) such as rain sticks, the life cycle of butterflies and more. The old games, such as the frog toss and spider drop created by Ranger Eric Buzonas, and the bird houses and oriole feeders will all be available. If you would like to volunteer for driving, crafts or games, call the Dead Horse Ranch office, 928-634-5283, and we will get the information to Barbie. There will be two work shifts during the Family Day events, so lots of volunteers are needed. For local folks, there is a sign up sheet at the Visitor Center. Thanks!



Clean-up at DHRSP submitted by Ranger Randy

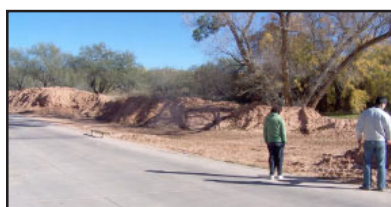


(above) A contingent of Mountain Men pitched camp in Raven Loop early in December, so they could ride in the annual Cottonwood Christmas parade. Dressed in leather and leading his fully loaded pack horse, this was just one of the entries. The campers had a pig roast to complete their visit.



Snow blanketed Mingus Mountain in December, closing I-40 and I-17 around Flagstaff and causing hazardous driving in Jerome. But, only a little snow fell in Cottonwood. Freezing nights have continued through January and into the first week of February.

"Flash" Backs!



(left & above) Less than a year ago, City of Cottonwood workers scooped up all the sand that had accumulated around the Rattlesnake wash crossing and moved it up by the maintenance building. The hope was that the water could then flow easily to the river and carry the sand with it. However, heavy rain in October dashed those hopes, depositing more sand than ever in the road and along the banks. Ranger Max Castillo had to rent larger equipment in order to clear the road.
submitted by Nan Hephner

Our Thoughts Are With You!



DHRSP volunteers Bill and Ann Zeller (volunteering at Red Rock SP this winter) had to hurry home when they received word that their 6-month old granddaughter had passed on. Also in February, Carol Johnson (off-park volunteer) lost her uncle. Carol's father was known as the "Bobber Man" before he passed away last year. Our sympathies are with all of you.



Goings

* Bruce & Susan Williamson, leave end of March

Dates to Remember March

4 - Volunteer Meeting, 9:30 am, VRG studio
18 - Volunteer Meeting, 9:30 am, VRG studio

March MileStones

1-Jim Harris	19-Lynn Holland
2-John Hart	21-Ken House
3-Anne Zeller	22-Burt Appling
4-Margo Albright	22-Eric & Rebecca Buzonas
4-Chuck Mullins	23-Les & Elizabeth Bovee
7-William Birtwell	26-Tom Howe
11-Eric Buzonas	28-Peter Andress
12-Emmo & Shirley Oltmanns (1955)	
13-Joyce Jones	
18-Keven Ward & Patrick Rhoads	
18-Wes Scott	

Remembering The One You Knead!

Please join me in remembering a great icon of the entertainment community: the Pillsbury Doughboy. He died yesterday of a yeast infection and trauma complications from repeated pokes in the belly. He was 71. Doughboy was buried in a lightly greased coffin. Dozens of celebrities turned out to pay their respects, including Mrs. Butterworth, Hungry Jack, the California Raisins, Betty Crocker, the Hostess Twinkies, and Captain Crunch. The grave site was piled high with flours. Aunt Jemima delivered the eulogy and lovingly described Doughboy as a man who never knew how much he was kneaded. Doughboy rose quickly in show business, but his later life was filled with turnovers. He was considered a very smart cookie, but wasted much of his dough on half-baked schemes. Despite being a little flaky at times, he still was a crusty old man and was considered a positive roll model for millions. Doughboy is survived by his wife, Play Dough, three children: John Dough, Jane Dough and Dosey Dough, and their crazy uncle, Dough Nut, plus they had one in the oven. He is also survived by his elderly father, Pop Tart.

The funeral was held at 3:50 for about 20 minutes.

If this made you smile for even a brief second, please rise to the occasion and take time to pass it on and share that smile with someone else who may be having a crumbly day and kneads a lift.

submitted by Carl Hartman

